

Memo to -

The Hon. the Chief Secretary.

WHEAT HARVEST, 1939-40 - OCTOBER ESTIMATE.

As agreed at a Conference some years ago, each State Statistician prepares estimates of the Wheat Harvest as at or about the 15th October, November and December each year. It is not the practice to publish the October Estimate, but the Commonwealth Statistician is advised so that he can prepare a yield provisional estimate for the whole of Australia.

Any estimate based on conditions early in the season must of necessity be open to a wide margin of error.

As is usual, reports have been received dealing with conditions in each of the main wheat producing hundreds (approx. 400), and the present estimate has been compiled on the basis of these reports.

Taking the State as a whole, the rainfall from April to July was approximately the same as the mean of the previous 34 years and crops were growing nicely during that period. August was exceptionally wet with a State average of 3½ inches compared with the mean of only 2 inches, and at that time it seemed that a record yield per acre might be expected. Then there was a change for the worse, September only averaging 60 points compared with the mean of 1.67 inches. The Western Division only averaged ½ inch during September compared with the mean of 1½ inches while the Murray Mallee Division, which had not been so fortunate as the balance of the State as regards winter rains, only averaged ½ inch during September compared with the mean of over 1½ inches. This dry spell was accompanied by hot drying winds, particularly in the two above mentioned divisions, and the crops were adversely affected. Frosts also caused damage in a number of districts. Fortunately the second and third weeks of October were cool and showery, and the crops generally were benefitted, but most reports indicated that further rain was needed. With reasonably weather conditions from now to harvest, a total yield of 32½ million bushels might be expected from 2,800,000 acres, the average per acre being a little over 11½ bushels.

A. W. BOWDEN,  
GOVERNMENT STATIST.

Statistical Office,  
ADELAIDE.  
23rd October, 1939.